

have not had the opportunity to see exactly what is in the bill. I think we just got the papers yesterday, so there has not been much consideration.

As the chairman, I am sure, knows, there will be a desire on, I am sure, both sides of the aisle, perhaps, to offer some legislative proposals to the conference committee report if they are made in order. Can the gentleman enlighten us as to what kind of rule the conference committee report might be considered under?

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will continue to yield, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman, as well as this gentleman, having served on the Committee on Appropriations, understands that this is a very unusual process that we are going through. In fact, I do not think we have gone through this process anytime that I have served on the Committee on Appropriations, so we are sort of feeling our way trying to get the appropriations done.

I remind the gentleman that the Committee on Appropriations in the House passed out every one of the 13 bills out of committee, so we do have something to look at as to what at least the committee had done in the House; and they are trying to reconcile that with what the Senate did or what the other body did.

As far as bringing it back, it is the tradition of this House and has been the tradition of this House to bring back a conference report on an appropriations bill under a closed rule. To be honest, I do not know that we would want to change that.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. Let me make a couple of comments.

First of all, the gentleman is almost right; we did 11 of the 13 bills. But the second largest bill, of course, as the gentleman knows, on discretionary spending, not only did we not do it, but it was not considered in subcommittee, much less in full committee, the Labor-Health bill, which is, of course, itself over \$125 billion in discretionary spending, and somewhere approximately \$300 billion, when we include the mandatory spending within that bill, as the gentleman recalls.

But as the gentleman makes the point, this is the most unusual procedure for the appropriations process that I have seen in my 20 years on the committee. It is the least involvement, I think, that members of the Committee on Appropriations in the House have had on the product that now is being sent to us by the Senate.

I know that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. REGULA) on the Labor-Health bill introduced 2 days ago a Labor-Health alternative, which presumably will be used as a basis for that title of the bill to be conferenced. However, Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman, I would very much hope that in light of the extraordinarily unusual circumstances under which this appropriation bill is being considered, essentially emanating from the Senate,

which obviously from the House position is not what we want to see as normal practice, that the majority would very seriously consider, in the interests of democracy in this House, with a small "d," and in the interest of full debate on the priorities we are going to set forth in this bill that deals with over \$360 billion of discretionary spending, to have a rule that is not traditional, because we are not dealing with a traditional process.

I would hope that the leader, in discussions with the Speaker, with the majority whip, and with the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), as well as the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER), would consider a process which would allow Members to have a greater opportunity to express their views on this particular bill.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman for yielding again. The gentleman is correct in correcting me, that we only did 11 bills out of the committee. I do remind the gentleman that the chairman introduced a Labor-HHS bill, and it is my information that that is what they are working from.

Secondly, I would say that the conference committee as named has 12 Republicans and 10 Democrats on it, so the minority is very well represented on the conference committee, and will be, obviously, consulted and worked with in as open a manner as possible.

I would also point out the fact that conference reports are privileged resolutions, and it would be highly unusual for us to change the precedent and the rules governing privileged resolutions. So we are trying the best we can to accommodate any Member that is interested in what is going on in that conference, whether they be Democrat or Republican, by opening up the process as much as possible and having a process that Members can plug into so that their voices can be heard in the consideration of the conference.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I understand what the gentleman has said; but I am sure the gentleman also understands our consternation, because we are going on a retreat for 2 days. We are leaving here tomorrow morning. I ask the gentleman when the conference is going to occur. We really do not know when the conference is going to occur.

As the gentleman knows, like himself, I am a ranking member on the Committee on Appropriations. I have received no notice of a scheduled conference on this particular piece of legislation. I am one of the higher-ranking Members in the House. Therefore, I would think the gentleman and I would have access; but the more junior members of the Committee on Appropriations and those who do not serve on the Committee on Appropriations, while theoretically having some access to a conference, if the conference is never held, if there is no scheduled meeting, if they have no opportunity to participate in those deliberations, it is very difficult for them, short of acting on the floor, to consider this legislation.

So I would simply ask of the leader, Mr. Speaker, again in light of the extraordinarily unusual process that has been pursued over the last 12 months in dealing with the appropriation bills, and the fact that we did not bring the Labor-Health, one of the largest bills that our committee considers, to the floor or to full committee or to subcommittee for consideration, and yes, the chairman introduced a bill, but it was introduced by the chairman alone; it was not cosponsored by anybody else. That did not give us much input.

I will not belabor this point further, but I would hope and ask my colleagues, in light of the fact that this is the first substantive piece of legislation that we are going to consider, that it be considered with an opportunity for those of us who represent somewhere in the neighborhood of 49 percent of the people of the United States to have their voice heard meaningfully in the deliberations.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, the gentleman makes a very good point. We want to be fair to all concerned. We want to have this as open a process as we possibly can make it.

I just want the Members of this body to know that we just received the paper from the other body last night, so it is going to take probably the entire time of the gentleman's retreat for the staff to go through that paper and get it ready for Members' consideration. Obviously, the Members that are interested in having an impact on this conference will probably have an opportunity, or I know they will have an opportunity, starting Sunday or Monday, to have input into that process. I offer to the gentleman that if anybody feels that they have been shut out of the process, our office is open and we are more than willing to work with them.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his comments.

ADJOURNMENT TO FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2003; AND ADJOURNMENT FROM FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2003, TO TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2003

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 10 a.m. on Friday, January 31, 2003; and further, that when the House adjourns on Friday, January 31, 2003, it adjourn to meet at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, February 4, 2003.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

INTRODUCTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ACCESSIBILITY ACT

(Mr. PETRI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)